

**T**HEN Jesus came  
to Bethany. There  
they made him a supper;  
and Martha served; but  
Lazarus was one of them  
that sat at the table with  
him. And Mary a-  
nointed the feet of Jesus,  
and wiped his feet with  
her hair: and the house  
was filled with the odour  
of the ointment.— St. John

# THE LOVE-WATCH

*by*

**WILLIAM ALLEN KNIGHT**

Author of "The Song of Our Syrian Guest"



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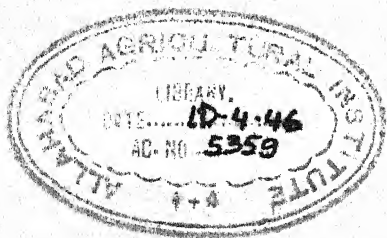
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**CHICAGO**

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*by*

WILLIAM ALLEN KNIGHT



To the Memory of  
Arthur Byron Russell  
Our Brother in Heaven



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Where wert thou, brother, those four days?  
There lives no record of reply,  
Which telling what it is to die  
Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbors met,  
The streets were fill'd with joyful sound,  
A solemn gladness even crown'd  
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ!  
The rest remaineth unreveal'd;  
He told it not, or something seal'd  
The lips of that Evangelist.

—Gennyson.

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## ❧❧ A Foreword ❧❧

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HERE is a story of love, always a sacred theme when a story is truly told. But if you would follow these pages, friend, remove from your feet the dust of the street; for here is holy ground indeed. My story enters the sanctities of the home which the Nazarene seems to have found the most congenial of all the homes he knew on earth; it leads through Gethsemane and out to Calvary; it crosses the threshold of paradise.

How else could I write this story? For in every line of it I have felt the pulsation of these questions: What did it mean in the Bethany home when it was learned that their Friend was in the hands of his enemies? What did it mean to each member of that household separately, including the brother?

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## ❧❧ A Foreword ❧❧

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My kinsman who helped to kindle these questions in my heart will not forget the night in this study when he spoke the single sentence which is set like a pearl in the pages of this little book.

Nothing can express my thought of the story I now give to my friends, known and unknown, more truly than Browning's words:

"I spoke as I saw.

I report as a man may of God's work—all's  
Love, yet all's Law."

This story would picture the working of the laws of love and the love within all law.

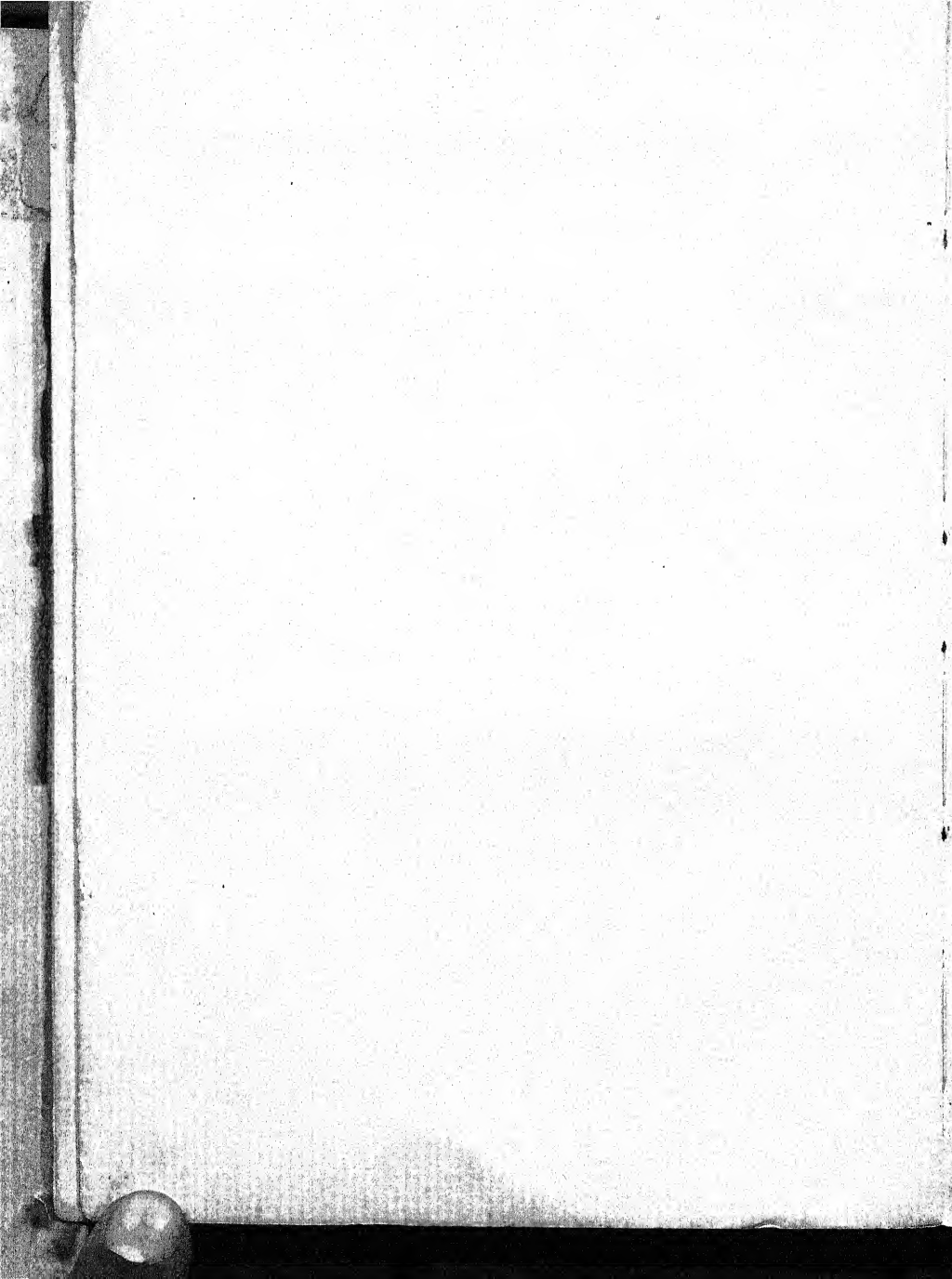
Friend of mine, whose heart makes quiet somewhere in the noisy world while your eyes rest on these pages, let me speak this word only:

Our feverish times need a fresh consciousness of the life beyond the things that crowd us so,—the life that now is, the life of which God is

"The happy center and calm heart of all."

—W. A. K.

# ♣ The Love-Watch ♣



# The Love-Watch

## I

"Brother, do you think he is not coming home to-night?"

It was Martha who broke the wordless quiet in which her brother and sister were sitting while the evening came on. As she spoke she was placing the bowl-shaped, terra-cotta lamp on the stand by the open door. It was long since the sun had gone down behind Olivet, but the twilight had not deepened into dark until now.

The soft radiance of the carefully trimmed wick beamed on the face of the younger sister who sat in silence by the little table. The glow revealed Martha's question written in its oval

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## ❧❧ The Love-Watch ❧❧

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lines, and half answered; but with Mary that question had become too deep for words.

At the sound of the older sister's voice, Mary's youthful face, framed in its Jewish abundance of dark hair, was turned to her brother, and her full, lustrous eyes were fixed intently on his motionless features; but she spoke not a word. In the silence Martha moved to the open door and peered into the dark.

Presently Mary turned to the lamp-stand and went on as she had been doing before the twilight faded. Moving her slender, tapering finger from right to left she traced the lines in a roll of Hebrew parchment long treasured in the family. In the glow of the lamp the spiritual beauty of her countenance shone clear



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of the night shadows which hovered about the table and out-of-doors hid the path from the village street quite to the lighted threshold.

The brother stood now a little removed from the sisters, who seemed to have forgotten his presence in the eagerness of their common concern for the friend who came not. He was watching the sweet face turned to the light.

He did not fail to notice the quick intake of breath and the noiseless movement of the lips as with a start she bent her head nearer the parchment and set her eyes on a line fixed by a delicate finger. Then he saw her features lifted to the light with the eyes riveted on the line; saw the lips inaudibly fashioning the words: "He hath poured out his soul unto

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## ❧❧ The Love-Watch ❧❧

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death.'” At once he knew the passage which his sister was pondering. He knew too, as he had not realized before, what fears had awakened in her sensitive heart.

Manlike, Lazarus had been aware of the perils for their friend which were lurking in the city over the hill and had shut his thoughts in his own breast. Indeed, he had such an intense memory of the thrill of power which once passed through his own being at the sound of that friend's voice, that it had been hard to bring himself to the point of anxiety for him even when overhearing the mutterings of his bitter and powerful foes. For in the midst of such scenes, which had come to be more and more frequent of late, the sight of his friend's face always awoke in Lazarus a strangely blissful

## The Love-Watch

sensation as of hands breaking and the enkindling kiss of light on his eyes. Fear was done away.

But now that delicate face haloed there in the lamp's light, forgetful of his gaze, touched by the first pangs of love in travail, resolutely looking down into the black depths of the prophet's meaning — this tender bravery of his sister awoke the deeper, innermost memories of his strange experience. For the pain and bewilderment of earth evermore make men mindful of what they have learned of heaven, be it little or much.

So Lazarus now recalled how in those hours in paradise his spirit's quest had been to share the watch kept by all who were gathered there; he remembered how every act of his sisters' friend, every move-

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## ❧❧ The Love-Match ❧❧

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ment of his foes, were things they desired to look into; he remembered, too, how with brooding sympathy they communed together of his sufferings and the glories that should follow.

"Would that I might tell her of these things!" he said deep within himself.

So vivid now were the recollections of those four days, so consoling was the insight they imparted, that it became hard for him to realize that he was once more within earth shadows save as he fixed his eyes on the sister's countenance there in the beams of the evening lamp.

"O lights of earth that fail the heart!" he sighed.

Then there came to him a memory, a memory distinct, but touched with peace eluding words; a memory of how once

## ~ ~ The Love-Clatch ~ ~

he looked down on that same dear face when it was wrung with grief and wet with tears for him, and how his spirit's joy fell into a rhythm as of words:

"She would wonder why she wept could she come for an hour where I am."

Turning softly to the shadowy wall to hide his emotions, the man took down his walking staff as he whispered: "O all hearts that grope through shadows here, could you but know what light awaits you there!"

So it was that Lazarus resolved to put himself where he could receive the coming shock and transmit it gently to his sisters. For this is the way of good men with those they love.

"Did not our friend himself give them warning?" he reflected. "Did not he



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speak in their presence last Sabbath eve of 'the day of his burying'? And he is but three and thirty!"

With a longing too deep to be fathomed by words, the brother looked once again on Mary's face and said: "The love-watch has begun on earth!"

Then he moved toward the door, touched Martha's arm as he passed out, and together they disappeared in the darkness of the spring night.

As soon as they were alone under a familiar old tree, the anxious woman brought her face close to her brother's and said in a hushed voice: "Lazarus, he sat under this very tree as yesterday's sun went down! Tell me, brother, do you know whether he is coming home to-night?"

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## ❧❧ The Lobe-Watch ❧❧

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Lazarus looked down on his sister's eager eyes and was still speechless.

"You know he came back to us in the evening of the first day of the week, Lazarus, that day when the people made a procession, and we here at home could hear them shout Hosanna over the top of Olivet even until they crowded into the city gates across the Kedron; and on the evening of the second day he came, and then at the close of the third day also; and last night he was with us. Oh, how worn he looked each night, and how glad he seemed to enter our door!"

The man put his arm about his sister, but was still silent.

"Did you notice, Lazarus, how once the strain left his face when he looked down and smiled on me? It was the



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## ❧❧ The Love-Watch ❧❧

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evening of the third day; I can never forget it. I was washing the dust of the mountain road from his quivering feet. He was so weary, so weary! My hands feel their trembling yet! But his sad eyes brightened and he smiled on me. And do you remember, brother, how he laid his hand in Mary's and closed his eyes and left it so, saying not a word till I had finished? Lazarus, once as I glanced up from that dear work, I saw a tear glistening through his closed lashes and falling slowly in the dark hollows about his eyes. Tell me, good Lazarus, if you know what all this means; or at least tell me whether you think he will come home and be with us to-night."

The man glanced through the lighted door. Mary was still bending over the

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## ❧❧ The Love-Match ❧❧

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parchment in the lamplight. "Did you see what Mary was reading?" he asked, without returning his eyes to Martha's.

"Yes, Lazarus," was the answer, softened by a sigh.

The brother knew that the meaning of the words, little or much, lay in that sigh. He knew not how to interpret its subtle disclosure of his sister's heart. Was it only the forbearance of the busy caretaker, or was it a sign that she, too, was entering the shadow of the mystery? He could not tell. Love finds a by-path at such times, and so it was now.

"Sister, do you know he did not go into the city yesterday, but abode on our side of the mount all day? I chanced to come upon him several times under our Bethany trees. There seemed to be great

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## ❧❧ The Love-Watch ❧❧

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heaviness of spirit at times; then the light would come again in his eyes and he would smile and talk in the most tender way with some one who was going by. I never heard him talk so eagerly and so strangely sweet as he did toward evening with a lad whom he passed just before he came into our home at twilight. Sister, he talked to the boy about a son being true to his father! Laying his hand on the youth's head — I could but mark his words, so hushed was his voice — he said, 'A son should say, Father, not my will but thine.' Then we came home to you and Mary."

"O brother, but will he not come to our home this night also?"

Lazarus then told how he had heard their friend talking with his companions during the day just past, that Thursday

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## ❧❧ The Lobe-Watch ❧❧

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of long ago. "This morning when some of them were going into the city he told them about a room which would be ready for them somewhere within the gates," he began. "I heard him say it was the room where he must eat the feast with his disciples, and to-night!"

Martha startled. "Why to-night? The passover is to be eaten on the eve of the morrow!"

"But he said he must eat with his disciples to-night," was the low answer.

Martha's features were set; perplexity and half-awakened dismay were in her face together; soon her breast was swelling and sinking with the deep, sudden breathing of a woman with an agitated heart. "He said he must eat it to-night!" she murmured.

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Lazarus felt a shudder pass through her whole frame. "Sister, the night is damp with dew and the air is chill. Go in and be with Mary. Ask her to read to you the words of the old parchment. You know how long our family has cherished it." Gently pressing his lips to her brow he added: "The gates may be passed at night when the passover multitudes are gathered. I will try to go into the city, sister, and when I have found him I will bring you word."

"And will you not bring him home, dear heart, if you can?"

Slowly the man answered, "Yes — if I can."

Lazarus soon left the houses of the village behind and took the open road. Its darkness, deepened at many places by

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clumps of the palm-tree, was somewhat relieved now, for the passover moon was mounting the sky. "Ah, if I can!" he repeated as he lifted his eyes to the paling stars.

Following the road around the southern slope of Olivet, he saw the few scattered lights of Bethphage off to the left and reflected on the service rendered by a friendly villager on the day of the procession. Being himself one of a circle of private friends, he felt sure that he knew with practical certainty "the good man of the house" mentioned in the morning conversation, who would provide the room made ready for the feast.

"There is no household in all the city more likely to be trusted thus, in such perilous days, than that of brother Mark,"

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## ❧ The Lobe-Watch ❧

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he mused. "Thither will I go. Yet, alas, what avails my going? The hour is come. Mary has found the truth; she has read aright the olden words, 'despised and rejected of men.' And now Martha has discerned all in the necessity of the feast to-night, if at all. I, whose spirit has understood by such strange experience, I who have been in paradise and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter, I have kept the seal of silence on my spirit. But they have divined it all. 'He hath poured out his soul unto death.'"

Lazarus was filled with these thoughts when he reached the point where the road rounded the shoulder of Olivet, and Jerusalem spread its venerated beauty on the hills across the Kedron valley.



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The scene threw a spell upon him. He stood still in awed reverie. The full moon of the passover season poured its light on the city, illuminating it as with the glories of a thousand years of sacred destiny. "O city of David," he whispered, "would that light from heaven might dispel the dark shadows which this night shall fix on thy holy hills forever!"

The dumb walls that rose as from the valley beneath him seemed in the moonlight to huddle their massive forms as if at this season specially guarding and cherishing their ancient trust. "And the Hope of Israel is within your guard tonight, despised, rejected!" He groaned in spirit and stood with his gaze fixed on the moonlit city.

Straight before him rose from the

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## ~ ~ ~ The Love-Clatch ~ ~ ~

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blackness of the valley the ridge, five hundred feet in height, on which stood the temple of Israel's God, a vast pile of marble and gold. In the soft radiance of the night its august mass of whiteness was touched at points by the glint on wall or roof where the moonlight found gold and seemed to smile.

Then a vision broke on his spirit; a vision of the city's life, for a thousand years clinging about that temple hill. His eyes saw all as in panorama. Southward lay the steeps marking the most ancient part of the city's enclosure. There of old was Mount Zion whose towers and bulwarks and palaces were the subject of exultant song.

Westward, beyond the temple-crowned hill, rose through the night the higher

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slopes included in "the city of David" by the valiance of his arm. As his gaze rested there Lazarus saw the dim outlines and glimmering lights of the now disempowered palace of the Maccabees, and far up in the western background the palace of the hated Herods, with its high towers in silhouette against the night sky.

Sweeping to the north he could trace the city crowding up the hill of Acra, while far beyond the olden wall, northward and around to the east, the populous suburbs of later growth filled the slopes of Mount Bezetha, until the city closed in again near to the north side of the temple hill.

Thus Jerusalem seemed to Lazarus that night to lie like a jeweled girdle clasped about the rock-crowned ridge,

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whereon her temples had stood since David's soul enshrined those hills. The vision flooded his mind with the immortal longings of his race.

"God of Israel," he groaned, "canst thou bear with thy people's blindness in the things that will come to pass among these sacred hills before the dawn — and after it?"

In anguish of heart he fell to watching the myriad lights. Some were clustered, as where the black bulk of the tower of Antonia, headquarters of the guards, loomed beside the white majesty of the temple; some were moving alone, appearing and disappearing, as busy men were hurrying on public or private duty; and some, like the stars for number, spread afar, marking the sweep of the city's dwellings.

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He reflected how the Holy City was now teeming to her gates with the sons of Israel. "To keep in remembrance Jehovah's mercy in that night of long ago, have ye come hither. Could ye but know the crowning mercy of all the centuries which ye shall this night despise and reject!" He was speaking in a deep whisper. "Could ye but know it," he went on with growing fervency, "as do they who have entered into rest!"

Suddenly a rush of emotion came upon him. Lifting his voice to a full shout that carried far down the black depths of the valley, he cried: "O brethren, men of the stock of Abraham, I who have been with those who are in Abraham's bosom"—Here the flood of feeling choked his utterance. In the pause he was

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## ❧❧ The Love-Watch ❧❧

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startled by the reverberations of his cry in the still night air. Listening thereto he heard faintly a shout of response come up through the darkness of the valley from a spot outside the walls where tents were spread for the night. Thus calmed, he bethought himself and in hushed utterance said: "But, no, I may not speak to them."

Like one who raises his hands in prayer, lifting his face to the stars he whispered: "Oh, that they might see it all as it is seen there! Would that they could know how legions of angels are near him, ready if he but call, ready to thwart his foes if he but turn from bearing the sin of the world to-night!"

Looking once more toward the city, a sudden flashing of lights about the tower

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of Antonia drew his attention. It was caused by the opening of doors. The guards were aroused. Then lights were seen in the region where he knew the house of the high priest, Caiaphas, stood. Quickly they disappeared.

"But of these things I may not speak to them," the distant watcher went on. "How strange that by mere chance he fixed that story in my mind above all others!"

Then he fell to pondering the memory — how one day the patient Teacher stood talking to a crowd in the open air, and they were dull of heart, and his enemies spurred them on to be noisy and troublesome, until a pallor came over his eager face and his eyes painfully scanned the crowd; how he suddenly raised his voice and began





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telling them a story. Then as they fell to listening again and all was quiet, a strange thing happened; though he never used a name in any other story, he told them now of a certain poor man who died, and he said his name was Lazarus! Harkening closely, as any man would do at the sound of his own name, he heard him telling how one pleaded that Lazarus, who was in Abraham's bosom, might go back to earth to warn men; and the story ended: "Neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." So ran his memory, a silent stream that broke now into sound:

"I cannot forget that story, cannot forget it. But, oh, how strange that now I understand it as only they who have been in paradise can! I, a man named Laza-

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## ❧❧ The Love-Watch ❧❧

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rus, walk the earth again with heaven's silence on my lips; for I have seen how, more than wise men dream, even the good of earth are able to know only in part, and the bad are wholly blind. Even my sisters who love him so, even they cannot know fully, cannot know as all is known in heaven. Therefore are they silent, the loved ones who keep their peaceful watch in paradise looking down on those they love. Thou, too, must hold thy peace, my heart. Be bearer of thy heavenly memory — alone — as one who bears a shaded lamp through dark rooms and longs for morning."

Slowly he turned and started back toward Bethany. Like a still, blue ocean the silence of the night skies lay boundless around the top of Olivet. His foot-

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fall sounded in his ear like the lap of sleeping waters on a sandy beach. He looked out over the hushed expanse of country eastward, where he knew his beloved village lay. Then he thought of his sisters; they were surely awake and waiting for him there in that deep quiet. What should he say to them? He must bring them word of their friend; and he would. Resolutely he turned about and soon stood once more in full view of the city's mysterious beauty, veiled in darkness and gemmed with lights.

"If thou hadst known," he began to whisper unawares. "Ah, those were his own words spoken but five days since at this very spot! O thou whose great heart is aching somewhere in yonder

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## ❧❧ The Love-Match ❧❧

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city, didst thou call my spirit back to earth for the sake of my sisters only? Or can it be that it was for this also, that thou shouldst have at least one to walk near thee whose heart is able to share thy heavenly yearning?"

At that moment Lazarus saw lights as of flaring torches far down in the darkness of the valley. As he watched he could descry a band of men, and then he made out that the gate leading to the Kedron valley was open, and a company was coming out bearing torches.

"Perhaps I may gain entrance there," he said, "and I will go to stand beside thee, thou lone One, that thou mayest see one man in all the city's throng who understands thy yielding, one who sees all as they see it in heaven."

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So saying he started down the road into the valley where, wrapped in darkness, there was a garden.

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## ❧❧ The Love-Watch ❧❧

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### II

During the hours of this spiritual struggle on Olivet, midnight had come in the Bethany home. In the hush of its approach the sisters had been finding that way through lonely watching under the shadow of overhanging sorrow which women have had to learn since the world of men began. Different in temperament and impulse, they had ministered each to the other, and the crucible of sorrow had found their love the same and melted it into one. Martha had replenished the shallow lamp more than once; Mary had singled out line after line from the old parchment and held them up to the light of her spirit's flame until both saw all.

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## ❧❧ The Love-Watch ❧❧

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At length Mary's weary head was infolded on Martha's breast; and so the night wore away while their hearts communed in tender words or more tender silence. So they kept watch together.

It was far toward the time when the gray of dawn would appear that they heard a sound as of one approaching their house. They were startled. Till now they had forgotten the exposure of the open door. "It is our brother," said Martha soothingly, as she saw a form in the path. "And he brings no one with him," was Mary's answer, without opening her eyes or lifting her head from her sister's arms.

Worn and pale, with the marks of dust and perspiration on his face, the brother stopped in the light of the door. The



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sight of his sisters, motionless in their loving embrace and speechless as if understanding all and needing not to question him, deepened the aching at his heart. Entering, he bent over them in silence. He laid a trembling hand on Mary's hair and stroked it softly. With eyes still closed, and her voice muffled in her sister's embrace, she was trying to speak. But these were the only words uttered:

“‘As a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb!’”

The brother's thought finished the prophet's sentence, and so in deep perplexity he did not open his mouth to speak.

Presently Martha raised herself without a word and left the room. When she

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## ❧ The Love-Watch ❧

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returned it was with a towel and a basin of water, and a tray of dates and bread with a cup of wine. This simple act of ministry to their exhausted brother, instinctive and akin to common life, made it possible for them to talk of what had been seen in the journey over the hill. O little acts of love that fill the common day, how you make home for us and nurse our spirits till they master life and reach their heaven!

So it was that Lazarus told them this narrative and relaxed the tension of wordless grief. For this is ever the way of love with sorrow.

“It was in the garden near the crossing of the Kedron that I found him. I had lingered long where the road turns down the western slope; for the city

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seemed so vast, so mighty, and I, alas, I knew not how to baffle its blind hate of him.

“Near the beginning of the third watch, seeing the Kedron gate open and a band of men with torches passing out, I hastened down the road resolved to go within the walls and find him if I could.

“At the bridge over the Kedron I saw a man pausing at the roadside. He had a linen cloth thrown about him and seemed to have come forth in haste and to be following I knew not what.

“‘Friend, didst thou see a band with torches pass this way?’ I asked.

“As he turned I saw it was none other than Mark, to whose house I thought of going. ‘Lazarus, are you indeed here?’ he exclaimed in a whisper. ‘Ah, brother,

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what a night is this for us who love him!’ With eager haste I asked: ‘Have you seen him, brother? Where is he?’ ‘He is in yonder garden, I fear; and the band with torches has just passed therein, and Judas is at their head!’ Then we two hurried into the garden.

“We lingered under an old olive-tree; for the men with their torches were huddled together a little way within the inclosure, and some were laughing under their breath as Judas puckered his face and made as though he would kiss a tall man of the band and gestured as if to say, ‘So!’”

As her brother thus spoke Mary closed her listening eyes, buried her face in her hands and shuddered.

“While we waited Mark told me in whispers how the night had been spent at

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his mother's house. He and the Twelve were alone in the upper room, Mark said, only Judas passed down the stair early. He said there was a deep quiet in the room a long time with only one voice sounding. During this stillness he fell asleep. Once he was aroused by the sound of a hymn, he thought, but it seemed so broken and subdued as he remembered it that it may have been only a dream. At length he was awakened suddenly by the sound of many feet on the stairs. He hurried out with the cloth wrapped about him, and saw a band of men with swords and torches at the foot of the stairway; but he found the upper chamber empty and dark. 'And I have followed them here,' Mark said, starting up as the band began to move on into the garden."

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Lazarus paused.

"But did you see him, good Lazarus? We would know all," Martha exclaimed.

"Yes, sister, I saw him and — he saw me!" He quickly checked the emotion that welled up as the last words were uttered.

A smile broke in Mary's eyes, unspeakably loving, but it faded ere it touched her lips.

Martha found voice to say: "If he saw thee — there — then, he would understand, he would think of our home; that would give a touch of comfort!"

"He would be reminded of a better home," Lazarus reflected, "and of the deeper interest of hearts that keep watch for him there." But he said naught of this.

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"As we followed the band, keeping in the dark and a little to one side, we suddenly came upon several men asleep under the trees. Fearing an outcry we fell back; the men with torches passed on.

"Then out of a dark recess we saw a tall form approach the sleepers. Bending over them a few words were spoken. It was something about keeping watch with him, but I could not hear all he said, so low was the voice, so mellow and even its tones. But at once I knew that it was he and that he was talking to friends.

"I was about to go near and speak with him. Oh, the longing that seized me for a touch of his hand! But it could not be. The band had turned about and was coming toward him rapidly. The flare of the torches was beginning to play upon his



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garments; soon his figure stood sharply outlined in the dark.

“Sisters, I have seen his face sweet with peace as he watched the light run up the sky and tint the clouds when the sun had set; but never, on earth, have I seen repose like that on his countenance as he stood facing the glare of those torches. His hands were still, his tall form at ease, his eyes pensive and gentle as a nursing mother’s.

“When they had come near and stopped, he waited in silence. The suspense was almost more than I could bear; but he was standing in complete repose in the full blaze of the upraised torches!

“At length, slowly moving from the band, a man stood forth; he crossed the lighted space between the men and the Master;

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he paused an instant, then, at a suppressed murmur from the band, raised himself on tiptoe and kissed him!

"He did not lower his head to receive it; his body was motionless; his eyes were lifted, not lowered. The stillness was so intense that all heard the sound of the coarse lips.

"It was Judas, the man who found fault with Mary last Sabbath eve."

Martha put her arm around her sister, but did not so much as shift her gaze from their brother's face.

Lazarus lowered his voice almost to a whisper as he went on: "In the hush that followed our friend spoke. 'Companion, that for which thou art come!' he said. His voice was like the sound of a deep harp-string softly touched.



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## ❧❧ The Love-Match ❧❧

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"Presently he moved a few steps toward the band, leaving Judas at his back, and stood in silence. Then he said: 'Whom seek ye?'

"A voice from the midst of the torches answered: 'Jesus of Nazareth.' And without a tremor or a motion he replied: 'I am he.'

"There was such majesty in his presence that they seemed to quail and fall back before him. But it was only for a moment. I can hardly tell what followed. Suddenly confusion broke. They were closing around him. I found myself in the midst of the tumult, so near him that I touched his hand. Serenely he turned and looked in my face. A light broke over his countenance as though a smile or a word to me were coming. Oh,

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that I might have had that word! But at that moment they seized the hand that I had touched, drew it down and bound him. He bowed his head and stood speechless and submissive.

"As the night wind fanned his hair, I caught the fragrance of pure spikenard, rare and sweet, mingling with the smell of the torches. Mary, I think it was the fragrance of your alabaster still lingering on his head.

"Then they led him away — alone."

Silence fell on the bowed heads. Unnoticed Martha's lamp smoldered till its flame flickered out.

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## ❧❧ The Love-Watch ❧❧

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### III

It was morning on the hills that are round about Jerusalem; morning, too, in her narrow, crowded streets; morning where lone sentries paced her far-lying walls, and morning full and radiant on the glittering uplift of her temple.

Along the roads leading to the city's main gates the Roman guards on the walls beheld long lines of people coming in. They marveled and swore sullenly by pagan names; for little did they know of the ancestral joy of that pilgrim song:

"Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem."

Toward nine o'clock the stream of people coming by the north road was

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## ❧❧ The Lobe-Watch ❧❧

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checked. There was an execution on hand; by the Roman method, that is, on a cross, and at the usual place. That was all.

But an unusual number of people were surging out through the gate that morning, and they moved with such slowness that the guards watching along the wall wondered why it was allowed. Little did they dream of the weight that bore down the doomed man's steps!

So it was that the two streams of people presently swelled to a human sea around the place called "The Skull." But the guards on the walls saw the spears and helmets of the Roman soldiery in the throng, and so looked on only occasionally as a pastime.

At length a sudden clamor of voices as



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in raillery drew their gaze along the whole line of the wall.

“By all the gods of Olympus, there are three of them,” said one and another gruffly, as three crosses were raised to view a little above the throng. Then they took up their beat heedlessly, watching the crowd ebb and flow, while the hours wore on.

O nameless men, imperial Cæsar’s guards, pacing the walls of a detested city in a distant province, could you but know it, there before your eyes in the morning light is the scene that shall draw the gaze and gently master the heart of the ages, when Jerusalem and Rome are buried in the dust!

The glare of midday was now streaming from all the fleckless Judæan sky.



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## ❧❧ The Lobe-Watch ❧❧

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While the throngs surged in and out the gate and round about the spot of the execution, there were some who stood and watched in silence; some, too, who pressed nearer to the suffering men when an opportunity was found and fixed their eyes on the central cross. Among these was a man supporting two women.

They gave little heed to the unpitying jests of the crowd; they seemed not to hear the hoarse cries of men who moved among the people zealously, men clad in robes with broad bands and borders. But not a word from the cross before which they stood escaped them; and not a groan.

Indeed, the sensitiveness of the little group seemed greatest when the low sounds of suffering ceased for a time. Once, in such a case, they learned that

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the hushing of his moans was because he was trying to talk with one of a group of women standing near his cross.

“He called her mother; I know no more!” was the answer a soldier gave Lazarus as he strode by.

Suddenly the soldier turned; he frowned darkly as he stood staring back at the crosses. One of the men on a side cross was uttering a cry of bitter mockery; the other was calling out something in rebuke. The muscles of the soldier's face showed that his teeth were clenched; he quickly riveted his gaze on the central cross. His frown vanished as he saw that the sufferer's eyes were resting lingeringly on the upturned face of her to whom he had spoken.

His was not the only heart touched by

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## ❧ The Lobe-Watch ❧

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that sight. In the moment's hush that fell on the scene, words from one of the side crosses were heard; they seemed to be spoken reverently.

Then a response was heard. A voice of wondrous sweetness was sounding over the heads of the bystanders:

"This day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

A shout of derision went up from the men clad in the robes with broad borders. But the people for the most part did not join them. The soldier ground his teeth together and stood motionless and silent.

The heart of Lazarus leaped in his breast. "Paradise! Thou too art thinking of paradise amid this Babel pain! And I alone of all this throng know the bliss that comes when eyes are closed to

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## ❧❧ The Love-Watch ❧❧

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the things of earth." But not a word escaped his lips. He only put his arms more firmly about his sisters and moved a little nearer the cross.

At length in a voice raised by great effort above the muffling of agony, their friend uttered a cry.

"I thirst!" were the words he succeeded in forming.

Martha started up, but Lazarus tightened his arm about her.

"Never again, sweet ministries for him in our Bethany home!" she murmured.

Through all that followed they stood transfixed. A great darkness settled on their spirits. At last they saw his head fall forward, and hang — heavily — unmoved.

Stillness spread through the crowd.

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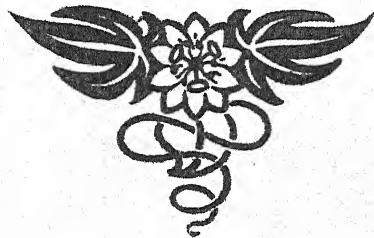
## ❧ The Love-Watch ❧

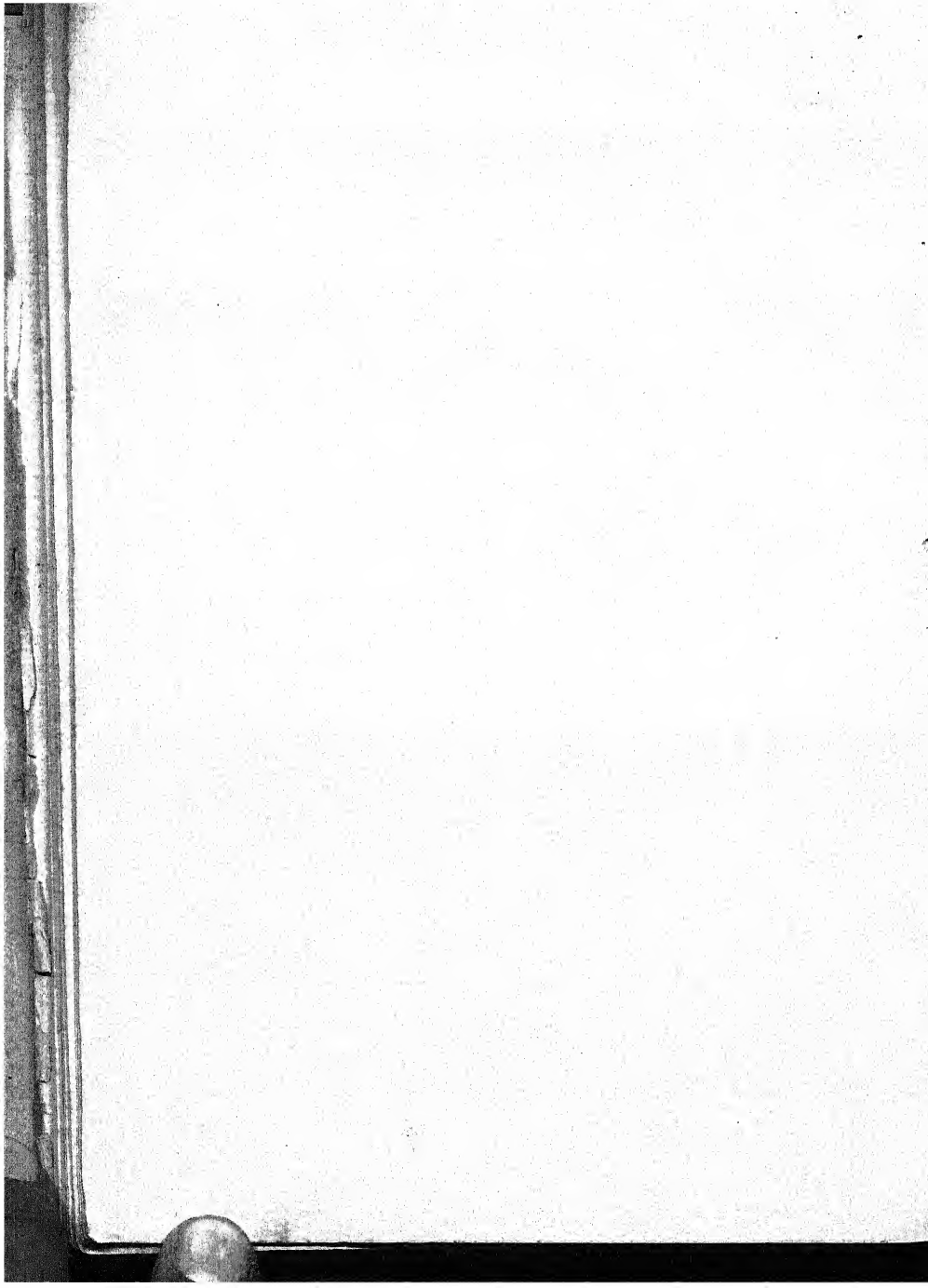
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It was Mary who broke the hush of their little group. "‘He hath poured out his soul unto death,’" she whispered.

How long they lingered they did not realize. But at last Lazarus felt the chill of the sunless air of night. Without a word he turned away and slowly led his sisters out to Bethany.

Their love-watch was over.





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